

FOLKWAYS RECORDS

FW 8740

Jewish Folk Songs

Ruth Rubin



musical settings
by Richard Neumann



JOE WEITZ

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MUSIC LP

JEWISH FOLK SONGS

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43 W. 61st ST., N.Y.C., U.S.A. 10023

Descriptive Notes Are Inside Pocket

GITARE — Love Song - Solo with Oboe, Guitar
SHELTN, SHEL TCH DEM TOG — Love Song - Solo with Guitar
PAPIR IZ DOCH VAYS — Love Song - Solo with Mandolins
FISHELECH KOYFN — Love Song - Solo, Chorus, Oboe, Accordion
BEKER LID — Work Song - Solo with Mandolins
DORTN, DORTN IBERN VASSERL — Love Song - Solo with Accordion
BAY DEM SHETL — Children's Song - Solo with Mandolins
ALE VASSERLECH — Lament - Solo, Women's Voices, Oboe
TONTS, TONTS ANTEGEN MIR — Children's Square Dance
Solo, Chorus, Mandolins

MOLAD'TI — Hebrew Sentry Song — Solo with Oboe
SHIR HA-HAGANA — Hebrew Marching Song - Solo, Chorus, Accordion
VIGLID — Yiddish Lullaby — World War II - Solo and Chorus
YAFIM HALELOT — Hebrew Shepherd Love Song - Solo with Oboe
ZEMER LACH — Israeli Hora — Hebrew - Solo with Accordion
SE UG'DI — Hebrew Children's Song — Solo
ZIRMU GALIM — Hebrew Love Song — Solo with Accordion
SHIR HA-AVODA — Hebrew Work Song - Solo, Chorus, Mandolins, Accordion

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JEWISH FOLK SONGS

- by -

RUTH RUBIN

17 Yiddish and Israeli Songs

Transliterated Texts, and
Literal Translations (Not To Be Sung)SIDE I, Band 1: GITARE

GITARE: A young girl, jilted in love, tells her troubles to her guitar. "First he proposed to me... Then he jilted me! ... The Lord alone knows of my heartache." ...

I sit and strum on my guitar,
And sing a song about myself.
Of my heartache and the Lord only knows,
Only He knows how deep is my pain.

We went walking together -
Round and round the depot -
That is when he promised,
To marry me, Mother.

We went walking together -
Round and round the city hospital -
When suddenly, he ceased to love me,
Oh so suddenly, Mother.

Ich zits un shpil mir oyi der gitare,
Un zing zich mir a lid fun zich aleyn.
Oy, mayn stradanye veyst nor Got dem emes,
Oy, mayn stradanye veyst nor er aleyn!

Shpatsirn zenen mir beyde gegangen,
Arum un arum dem kaylichdign vagzal.
Oy, tsugeshevoyrn hot er mir, Oy Mame,
Az ich vel zayn zayn froy un er mayn man.

Shpatsirn zenen mir beyde gegangen,
Arum un arum dem gorodskoy shpitol,
An umcheyn Mamenyu, hot er oyf mir gevorf'n,
An umcheyn, Mame, Mame, mit amol!

SIDE I, SHELTN, SHELIT ICH DEM TOG

SHELTN, SHELIT ICH DEM TOG: A young seamstress sings of the bitterness of love. This is a common theme in the 19th-century Yiddish Love Song. Interference of parents, the problems of dowry, social inequalities and all the ramifications of the "business of marriage" broke the heart of many a young man and woman of that day. Especially did this affect working-girls, who had no social position and no dowry to offer in a match.

Oh, cursed be the day that I was born!
Oh, cursed be that day forever!
Rather had my Mother "lost" me then -
When I was still a little child.

When I was still a little girl,
No troubles at all had I.
And now that I am older -
I did so want to play at love ...

Three long years we courted,
But oh, we've not yet married -
Oh there's no one to extinguish
The hellish fire in my heart!

Oy, sheltn, shelt ich dem tog fun mayn geboyrn,
Sheltn, shelt ich im biz atsind.
Nechay volt mich di mame geven farloyrn,
Beys ich bin gevezn a kleyn kind.

Ven ich bin a kleyn kind gevezn,
Oy fun kayn tsores hob ich nit gevist.
Um haynt az ich bin elter gevorn,
A libe shpilm hot zich mir farglist.

RUTH RUBIN is known from coast to coast through her fascinating lecture-recitals, in which she traces the origin and development of East European and Israeli folksongs, against a background of a century and a half of Jewish history. She is also known for her published essays on modern Jewish folksongs, her A TREASURY OF JEWISH FOLKSONG (containing 110 Yiddish and Hebrew songs, published by Schocken Books, New York, 1950), for her two previous albums of 78 R.P.M. recordings of Yiddish and Jewish folksongs and for two LP (33-1/3 R.P.M.) recordings: JEWISH CHILDRENS SONGS AND GAMES (Folkways) and YIDDISH LOVE SONGS (Riverside Records).

Shoyrn dray yor az mir shpilm a libe,
Um nemen, Oy vey, kenen mir zich nit.
Oy, in mayn hartsn brent an helish fayer,
Um farleshn ken es keyner nit.

SIDE I, Band 2: PAPIR IZ DOCH VAYS

PAPIR IZ DOCH VAYS: A "sophisticated" 19th century youth sings of his lady-love ...
"None in beauty with my love can compare ...
With her eyes so dark and her raven-black hair."

Paper is white and ink it is black -
My heart yearns for my darling love.
Three days on end I would gladly sit
Holding your hand and kissing your face.

Yesterday, I went to a wedding,
Many pretty girls did I see there.
Perhaps they were pretty, but none could compare
With your dark-black eyes and raven hair!

Your form, your manner, your graceful ways,
Have stirred the passions in my heart.
No one knows of my secret love,
My life now rests within God's hand.

Oh dear Lord, do grant me my wish -
You've given the rich honor and wealth.
All I ask is a hut on the green,
So my true love and I can dwell therein....

Papir iz doch vays un tint iz doch shvarts.
Tsu dir mayn zis lebn tsit doch mayn hartsn.
Ich volt shtendig gezessn, dray teg noch anand,
Tsu kushn dayn sheyn ponim un tsu haltn dayn hant.

Nechtn bin ich bay a chassene geven,
Fil sheyne meydelech hob ich dort gezen
Ay, fil sheyne meydelech, tsu dir kumt nit gor,
Mit dayne shvartse eygelech un mit dayne shvartse hor!

Dayn talye, dayn mine, dayn eydeler fason!
In hartsn brent a fayer, men zet dos nit on!
Ay, nito aza metnsh, vos zol zen vi es brent,
Oy, der toyt un dos lebn, zenen bay Got in di hent.

Oy, tayerer Got gib mir mayn farlang,
Dem oysher gistu kovid mit a sheynem gang!
Ay mir gib a shtibele oyf dem groz dem grinem,
Az ich mit mayn zis lebn zoln voynen derinen ...

SIDE I, Band 3: FISHELECH KOYFN

FISHELECH KOYFN: Sung by errant beggars in the courtyards of the large East European cities, or at a yarid (village fair), this song combines the tender sentiments of a lovelorn youth and the "devil-may-care" attitude of a gay young blade.

I went to buy some fish -
And bought a pickerel ...
And he who is guilty in my sad love,
May he be snuffed out like a candle-flame!

Without stones and without bricks,
One cannot build a house...
Oh, there's not a soul in this world,
Who does not pity me...

When a gambler, plays at cards,
He loses only his money.
I have gambled with my youth -
Dark and dreary is my world ...

Bin ich mir gegangen fishelech koyfn,
Hob ich mir gekoytt a hecht!
Un ver es iz shuld'ig in undzer libe,
Der zol oysgeyen vi a lecht!

On kayn shteyner un on kayn tsigl,
Kon men kayn hoyz nisht moyern.
Ay, s'iz nishto aza mentsh oyf der velt,
Vos er zol mich nisht badoyeren...

Az a kartyozhnik shpilt in kortn,
Farshpilt er doch nor zayn velt.
Ich hob farshpilt mayne yunge yorn -
Finster iz doch mayn velt. ...

SIDE I, Band 4 BEKER LID

BEKER LID: A baker's apprentice boy sings
sadly about his first factory job ... "The
baker-boss struts in his finery ... While I
pine away in drudgery ..."

Outdoors, there's a drizzling rain,
And the sky is overcast,
Since I have come to this bakery
My head swims and turns.

Oh, a mill-wheel turns and turns,
But it has its moment of rest.
Look at the youngest bakery-lad,
There's not a drop of blood in his face.

The baker-boss and his wife come to the factory,
Dressed in all their finery.
She wears diamond earrings in her ears
And he sports a golden watch and chain!

Indroyesn geyt a drobinker regn,
Ay, di volkenes zey hobn zich farshpreyt.
Tsayt ich hob nor di bekeray derkont,
Azoy hot zich mir der kop fardreyt.

Ay, a mil az zi molt, molt zi k'seyder,
Ay, ir opshtel hot oych a menit,
Tit nor a kik oyf dem klenstn beker-yingl,
Tsi farmogt er den a tropn blit.

Ay, der beker mit der bekern, zey kimen in der bekeray
Loyt zeyer raychtim un loyt zeyer shteyger!
Zi geyt ongetin a por brilyantene oyringen,
Un er in a goldenem zeyger!

SIDE I, Band 5 DORTN, DORTN IBERN VASSERL

After three long years of courtship, a lad
finds himself in a "distant land" (America perhaps?).
He recalls the "sad, sweet evenings" with his beloved
and pleads: "With your slender quill-like fingers,
darling, write me from afar."

Oh, far away across the water,
Oh, far away across the bridge,
You've driven me into distant lands,
And oh, how I yearn for you, my love.

How many evenings we sat together,
How many evenings into the night,
How many tears we've wept together,
In the first joys of young sweet love.

Oh, help me God, Oh Lord on High,
Oh, help me Lord, I'm feeling bad.
Three long years we courted each other,
But our love was not fulfilled.

I remember your eyes, like little black cherries,
And your lips like pink crêpe paper,*
And your slender, quill-like fingers -
Write me darling, from afar!

*In the days, "before lipstick," girls would
dip some pink crepe paper in a little water,
and apply it to the lips.

Oy, dortn, dortn ibern vasserl,
Oy, dortn, dortn ibern brik.
Fartribn hostu mich in di vayne lender,
Um benken, benk ich noch dir tsurik.

Oy, vifil ovntlech, tsuzamen gezessn,
Oy, vifil ovntlech, shpet in der nacht.
Oy, vifil treerelech mir hobn fargossn,
Biz mir hobn di libe tzuzamen gebracht.

Oy, helf mir Gotenyu, Oy Got in himl,
Oy, helf mir Gotenyu, s'iz mir nisht git,
Shoyn Tsayt dray yorelech vi mir shpilt a libe,
Un oys-shpilt di libe kenen mir nit.

Oy, dayne oygelech, vi di shvartse kershelech,
Un dayne lipelech vi rozeve papir,*
Un dayne fingerlech, vi tint un vi feder,
Oy, shraybn zolsti ofte briv tsu mir.

SIDE I, Band 6: BAY DEM SHTETL

BAY DEM SHTETL: A little boy, skipping about
in the backyard of his little house "at the
edge of town," tells us about his family, the
wonderful gifts his Daddy brings home, and
the miracle of a clucking hen that hatched
live chicks!

Near the village there stands a hut,
With a bright green roof,
And around the hut there grow
Many little trees.

And my Daddy and my Mommy,
Sister Chanele and I,
All together now have lived
For a long time here.

And my Daddy works so hard
All the long, long years,
And when he comes he brings
The loveliest of things!

Brings a pony and it neighs -
We have named it Mutsik.
Brings a poney and it neighs -
And we named it Tsutsik!

Brings a goose with a long neck,
Feathers white as snow,
Brings a hen that clucks and clucks
Till it lays an egg!

Mother then takes all the eggs,
My, but it's a trick!
She puts them under the setting-hen,
And then - we have new chicks!

Bay dem shtetl, shteyt a shtibl,
Mit a drinem dach,
Un arum dem shtibl vaksn
Beymelech a sach.

Un der tate mit der mamen,
Chanele mit mir,
Shoyn a lange tsayt ineynim,
Voynen ale fir.

Un der tate horevet, horevet,
Ale yorn zayne,
Un er koyft undz un er brengt undz
Zachn sheyne, fayne!

Brengt a hintele, vos se havket,
Mitn nomen Mutsik,
Brengt a ferdl vos se hirzhet,
Mitn nomen Tsutsik.

Brengt a gendzele mit a langn haldz,
Federlech vays vi shney,
Brengt a hun vos kvoket, kvoket,
Biz zi leygt an ey!

Nemt di mame, ot di eyer,
Ay, iz dos a moyfes!
Zetst zi oyf oyf zey a kvoke,
Hobn mir naye oyfes!

SIDE I, Band 7: ALE VASSERLECH

A woman who has loved and lost bewails her lonely, loveless life. She compares herself to a little brook that has dried up, to an earthen pot that is empty.

All the little brooks flow away,
The ditches remain empty.
There's no soul in all this world
Who understands my sorrow.

The years go by, the years fly away,
Time disappears like smoke.
Oh, when I recall your dear sweet face,
I am weak with yearning.

And when a maiden plays at love,
Her face blushes and blooms,
But when her love is not fulfilled,
She may die....

And when the little pots are dry,
They, too, remain empty.
When a maiden's love is not fulfilled,
She is doomed forever....

Ale vasserlech flisn avek,
Di gribelech blaybn leydig.
Nito aza mentsch oyf gor der velt,
Vos zol farshteyn mayn veytig.

Di yorelech tsi-en, di yorelech fli-en,
Di tsayt geyt avek vi royech.
Un az ich demon zich on dir mayn zis-lebn,
Geyt mir oys der koyech.

Un az a meydele shpilt a libe,
Shpiln in ir ale farbn.
Un az zi shpilt di libe nit oys -
Kon zi cholile noch shtarbn.

Un az di tepelech trikenen oys,
Vern zey ale leydig,
Un az a meydele shpilt ir libe nit oys -
Vert zi farfaln oyf eybig....

SIDE I, Band 8: TONTS, TONTS ANTEKEGN MIR

TONTS, TONTS ANTEKEGN MIR: Taught me by my Mother, this Bessarabian children's song consists of nonsense rhymes, against a description of a traditional Jewish wedding.

My sieve, it can't sift anymore,
It broke altogether!
My shoes are torn as torn can be,
In socks I dance much better!

Dance, dance toward me,
And I will dance toward you,
You will take the son-in-law,
The daughter-in-law for me!

The noodle-pot it broke in two,
The chick-peas burned inside,
All the women are dancing
In a ring around the bride.

Groom's folks, bride's folks,
Everyone is here -
Dancing at the wedding.
Blessed and full of cheer.

Hot zich mir di zip tsezipt
Un hot zich mir tsebrochn,
Hot zich mir di shich tserissn,
Tonts ich in di hoyle zokn!

Refrain:
Tonts, tonts antkegn mir,
Un ich antkegn dir,
Di'ist nemen dem eydim,
Un ech'l nemen di shnir.

Tsebrochn iz der lokshn-top, Chusn's tsod un kole's tsod,
Farbrent der mahit, Di gontse mishpuche!
Tontsn di machteynestes, Tontsn of der chossene
Di kole in der mit! In mozl un in bruche!

SIDE II, Band 1: MOLAD'TI

MOLAD'TI: A lonely sentry sings in the night. Composed by early "Chalutsim" (pioneers) guarding the first farm settlements in Palestine.

Born was I in the land of Canaan,
I also came from the fields of Horan.
How lovely is the night.

Molad'ti erets K'na-an,
M'gamat: s'dot Chorán.
Yalel.

SIDE II, Band 2: SHIR HA-HAGANA

This song was current during the years of Nazi occupation and extermination, among the courageous men and women engaged in rescuing Jews from the cruel grip of the German Nazis. It was also very popular in Israel during the struggle for Independence.

Between borders on pathless byways,
On pitch-dark nights, when no stars appear,
A company of brothers come marching,
For the homeland we are marching here.

For the helpless and the young,
Wide the gates we fling!
For the aged and the lame,
Victory we bring!

And should the gates be barred,
We will batter them down!
Every encirclement we will pierce,
Every rampart will be ours!

Brothers, no tears and no mourning,
Lean on our strength, ye weak,
Even for those still waiting,
A day of reckoning will come!

Ben g'vulot bidrachim l'lo derech,
B'lelot chashuchey kochavim,
Shayara shel achim l'lo heref,
Lamoledet anu m'lavim.

Refrain:
La-olel, v'laraen,
She-arim po niftach!
Lamach v'lazaken,
Anu po chomat magen.

Im hasha-ar sagur, en pote-ach,
Et hasha-ar nishbor v'nitots!
Kol choma b'tsura n'nage-ach,
V'chol sedek narchiv v'nifrots.

Shayara, al b'chi v'al tsa-ar,
Hisha-en al z'ro-i sav zaken,
Gam laze shesagar et hasha-ar,
Yom yavo shel nakam v'shilem!

SIDE II, Band 3: VIGLID

The shooting of some four thousand Jews on April 5, 1943 at Ponar (near Vilna), left a lasting impression on the sensitive poet, Leah Rudnitsky (born 1916), who herself perished at the hands of the Nazis that year. A three-year-old child was saved from the massacre and Leah wrote this lullaby for it.

Birds are sleeping on the bough,
Sleep, my precious child.
At your cradle in the dugout,
A stranger sits and sings to you.

Your cradle once did have a home,
Woven out of happiness.
Now your Mother, oh, your Mother,
Never will return to you.

I did see your father fleeing,
Under a hail of stones.
Across the fields there flew
His bitter lonely cry.

S'dremlen feygl oyf di tsvaygn,
Shlof mayn tayer kind.
Bay dayn vigl, oyf dayn nore,
Zitst a fremde un zingt. Lyu-lyu.

S'iz dayn vigl vu geshtanen,
Oysgeflochn fun glük.
Un dayn name, oy dayn name,
Kumt shoyk keynmol nit tsurik.

Ch'ob gezen dayn tatn loyfn
Unter hogl fun shteyn.
Iber felder iz gefloygn
Zayn faryosemter geveyen.

SIDE II, Band 4: YAFIM HALELOT

On a hillside, a shepherd guards his flock
from marauding jackals. Popular among early
pioneers in Palestine.

Lovely are the nights in Canaan,
Silent and crystal clear.
The stillness seems to sing.
My heart replies with a song.

The wail of the jackals is heard,
Cleaving the silent night.

My brethren have gone to tend the sheep,
They have gone to water the flocks.
And Rachel, Rachel my very own,
Leaps so lightly over the rocks.

The snow on top of Mount Hermon,
Melts slowly, slowly away.
Come to me, Rachel my love,
Come, let us leap and play!

Yafim halelot b'Chna-an,
Tson nim hem, uv'hirim.
V'had'mama palta shir
Ya-an libi b'shir!

Refrain:
Yil'lat tanum nuga
Tech'tse d'mi halayil.

Achay halchu lir'ot tsonam,
L'hashkot ha-adarim.
V'Rachel, Rachel sheli,
M'kapetet al harim!

Hashheleg al haChermon,
Holech v'namesy,
Bo-i elay Rachel sheli,
Bo-i na, v'nitaleys!

SIDE II, Band 5: ZEMER LACH

Composed during the recent "opening up"
of the Negev, Sabras (Jewish natives of
modern Israel) sing, plough, and dance
lustily for their native land.

I sing a song, a song to you,
To you my land, my native land.
The dance goes round, my song resounds,
For you my land, my native land!

The hills they all rejoice!
The Hora whirls around.
A thousand blossoms bloom
Upon this desert ground.

I plow, I plow for you,
For you my land, my native land.
The dance goes round, my song resounds.
I plow for you, my native land!

I dance for you, the Hora ho!
The Hora ho! My native land.
The dance goes round, my song resounds,
The Hora for my native land!

Zemer, zemer lach, zemer, zemer lach,
Zemer lach m'chorati, m'chorati!
Hamachol sovev, zemer lach dovev,
Zemer lach, m'chorati, m'chorati!

Telem, telem lach, telem, telem lach,
Telem lach m'chorati, m'chorati!
Hamachol sovev zemer lach dovev,
Telem lach, m'chorati, m'chorati!

Hora, Hora hach! Hora, Hora hach!
Hora hach! m'chorati, m'chorati!
Hamachol sovev, zemer lach dovev,
Hora hach! m'chorati, m'chorati!

SIDE II, Band 6: SE UG'DI

A shepherd and his lamb and kid are on their way
to the well. "With little bells and curly locks,"
the frisky animals romp about. In the evening,
the shepherd rests; eats his orange, bread and
oil; and plays a little tune on his reed. Text
and Tune: M. Weiner-Shilen.

A lamb and a kid went into the field together,
At noon, they scampered to the well to drink water
One was white, the other black, with long, curly locks,
Little strings of bells tinkling round their neck,
To the well, ran the flock.

On the ground the shepherds sat resting,
Eating bread, and oil, and an orange,
Run, you little rascals, have your fun now,
Soon we must return home, for evening is nigh.
Li, li, li, li, play, my little reed.

Se ug'di, g'di vase, yachdav yats'u el hassade,
Im tsaharayim el ma-ayan ratsu lishtot mayim.
Echad lavan, sheni sh charchar, im tal't'ley ozhayim,
Pa-amonim m'tsalties'lim al tsavarey adayim,
El hama-ayan ratsu adarim.

Yashvu l'arets haro-im rega kat lanu-ach,
Pat bashemen to-amim v'zahav tapu-ach.
Utsu, rutsu, shovavim, hasimcha ko terev,
Habayta ad m'at shavim, hine va ha-erev....
Li, li, li, li, ranen chalili.

SIDE II, Band 7: ZIRMU GALIM

This song came to Palestine with the early
pioneers from Eastern Europe. Translated
almost literally from the Yiddish, it
describes a youth on the bank of a quiet
stream, singing of his beloved.

Flow, little waves downstream,
Through hill and dale.
Bring greetings to my beloved,
Blessings without end.

Tell her, tell her, little wave,
Of my endless love!
How full of longing is my heart,
When she is far away.

Tell her, gentle little wave, Saper, saper peleg la,
Of my beating heart, Ota ma ohav!
That without her, life is gray Kama k'shura nafshi va,
And empty all around. Tsa-ari na hu rav.

Zirmu galim peleg zrom,
Derech har vagay.
La-ahuvati sa shalom,
Bracha ad b'li day.

Saper, peleg na-im la,
Et ga-agu-ay dom,
Biladeha chayay ma,
Saviv rek shomem...

SIDE II, Band 8: SHIR HA-AVODA

Popular in Israel. Text: N. Alterman. Tune:
N. Nardi.

The sea and the sky, oh lovely Jerusalem.
The heavens are bright from Negev to Galil,
The sun streams its light on us, its light.
The plough digs deep into the earth,
We dig a furrow, deep, so deep,
From early morning until night.

We sing, we sing together,
Our hammers sing along,
Our ploughs they ring in tones so sweet,
The work is one bright song!

Kachol yam hamayim, nava Y'rushalayim,
Orim hashamayim al Negev v'Galil.
Hashemesh ori lanu, ori,
Chirshi batelem vachazori,
Hamachresha ivri avori,
Ad layla leyl ya-afil.

Refrain:
Shir, shir aleyna,
Bapatishim nagen, nagen,
Bamechreshot renena,
Hashir lo tam hu rak mat-chil!

The music for Songs Nos. 3,4,5,6,7,10,11,12,13,
14,15 and 16, can be found in A Treasury of
Jewish Folksong by RUTH RUBIN, Schocken Books,
New York 1950.